

Executive Summary: 2025 Program Year

Nationwide Candidate Conservation Agreement for Monarch Butterfly on Energy and Transportation Lands

Background

The *Nationwide Candidate Conservation Agreement for Monarch Butterfly on Energy and Transportation Lands* (Monarch CCAA) is the first-of-its-kind nationwide, voluntary conservation agreement aimed at sustaining 2.3 million acres of habitat for the iconic monarch butterfly. The University of Illinois Chicago's (UIC) Energy Resources Center administers the Monarch CCAA as part of its Sustainable Landscapes Program.

Since its development, the Monarch CCAA continues to play a key role in growing industry-sector participation in sustaining



Photo: Milkweed growing near a trail. Courtesy of NiSource.



6th year of program implementation



72 enrolled partners



>1, 204,000 acres of habitat (adopted acres)



7.1 million acres enrolled



4,904 habitat plots monitored

Photo Credits: Exelon, NYPA, Florida DOT, WEC Energy, Illinois Tollway

monarch butterfly habitat at across the U.S. This summary provides a brief overview of the program's accomplishments reported to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) as part of the program's annual report for the calendar year 2025.

Conservation Measures

As of December 2025, 72 energy companies and transportation agencies across the U.S. had enrolled over 7.1 million acres in the Monarch CCAA. Within these enrolled lands, conservation measures that support monarch butterfly habitat were implemented on over **1,204,000 acres**,

Adopted Acres

- 0
- 1 - 150
- 151 - 1,500
- 1,501 - 15,000
- 15,001 - 45,000
- Over 45,000

In 2025, partners implemented all seven conservation measures included within the CCAA. The most commonly reported measure was setting aside suitable habitat (e.g., idle lands). Other conservation measures included conservation mowing, seeding and planting, woody brush removal, targeted herbicide applications, prescribed burning, and controlled grazing. Additionally, many CCAA partners implemented optional supplemental measures, which includes spatial modeling to prioritize habitat areas to implementing best management practices for invasive species prevention. All five of these measures were implemented in 2025.

In 2025, Monarch CCAA partners conducted habitat monitoring on a total of 4,904 randomly selected sampling plots across their adopted acres. This represented a 142% increase in the number of plots from the number sampled in 2024. Habitat monitoring recorded the abundance of milkweed stems, extent of nectar-producing plants, and observations of monarch butterflies. Monarch CCAA monitoring is sampled across two broad regions (the Midwest and Eastern U.S. region, and the Western and Southern U.S. region) as illustrated in Figure 2. Findings from 2025 monitoring include (summarized in Figure 3):

Milkweed abundance:

- 32% of plots in the Midwest and Eastern region met or exceeded the target of six or more milkweed stems
- 18% of plots in the Western and Southern region met or exceeded the target of two or more milkweed stems

Legend

2+ stems per plot target 6+ stems per plot target

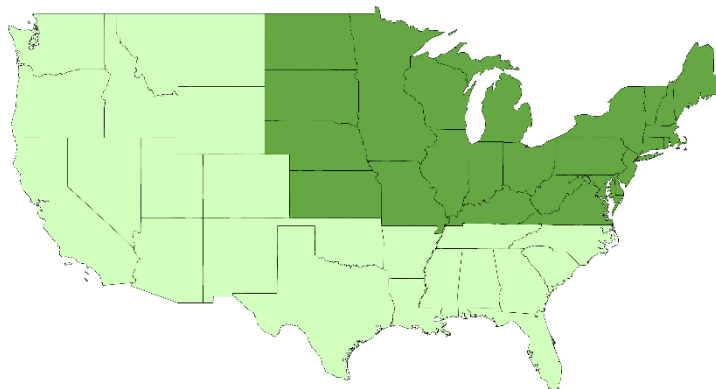


Figure 2. Monarch CCAA monitoring regions: Midwest and Eastern U.S. (dark green); Western and Southern U.S. (light green).

Nectar plant cover:

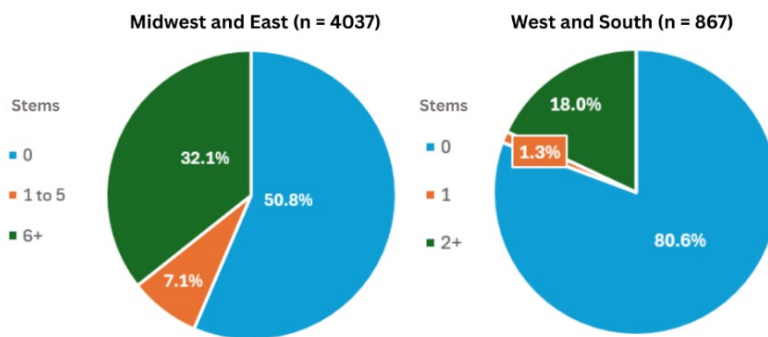
- 74% of plots in the Midwest and Eastern region had >10% nectar plant cover (2,995 of 4,037 plots)
- 59% of plots in the Western and Southern region had >10% cover (516 of 867 plots)

These results exceeded the USFWS targets for both milkweed and nectar resource abundance, as outlined in the CCAA's biological opinion.

Most partners voluntarily reported monarch observations at monitoring plots:

- Midwest and Eastern: monarchs observed on 12% of plots (472 of 4037)
- Western and Southern: monarchs observed 2% of plots (17 of 867)

Milkweed Abundance



Nectar Resource Cover

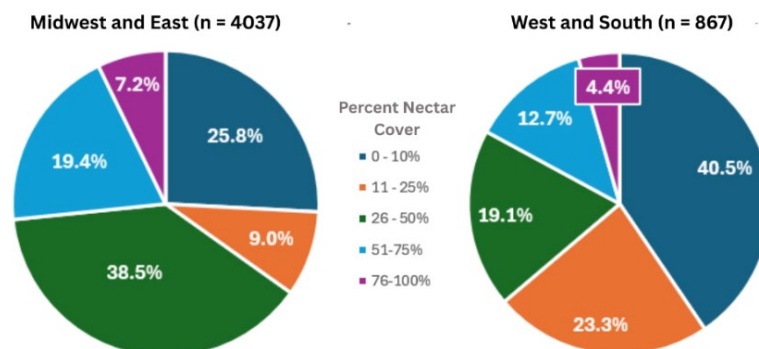


Figure 3. Aggregated results of 2025 Monarch CCAA habitat monitoring.

Summary

The 2025 reporting year exemplified the ongoing growth and collaboration among the Monarch CCAA's industry partners, UIC, and the USFWS towards improving conservation outcomes for the monarch butterfly and other pollinators. The Monarch CCAA is widely recognized as a conservation success for its ability to leverage conservation commitments across multiple industries and demonstrate value-added results for its enrolled partners. This success is only possible through the dedication of USFWS, industry partners, supporting conservation organizations, and the individuals involved who are committed to helping conserve the monarch butterfly and other species.

For More Information

To learn more about the Monarch CCAA, visit <https://rightofway.erc.uic.edu/national-monarch-ccaa/>